

St. Peter Church History – by David Cutright

In 1837, Bishop Purcell of Cincinnati purchased property at 17 South Walnut Street in Chillicothe from St. Paul Episcopal Church, and this became the first Catholic Church in Chillicothe. It was known as St. Mary Church. Soon, this church became too small for the increasing Catholic population. Bishop Purcell of Cincinnati purchased property at the corner of Church and Water Streets in 1845 and the cornerstone of St. Peter Church was laid on June 29, 1845. The new church was dedicated August 30, 1846. From this time, all services were held at the larger St. Peter Church. Problems soon arose between the English and German speaking parishioners. In 1849, about a dozen English speaking parishioners returned to the old St. Mary Church on Walnut Street. St. Mary Church moved to a former Methodist Church building at 45-47 West Second Street in 1852. This building served as St. Mary Church until 1869, when the present St. Mary Church was dedicated. In the meantime, St. Peter Church continued to serve the Catholic parishioners, most of whom, were of German ancestry. From 1847 to 1851, the Jesuit Fathers served St. Peter Church. In 1851, Father Edward Lieb became pastor of St. Peter Church. He served as pastor from 1851 to 1881. In 1896, St. Peter celebrated a Gold Jubilee. The parish contained 196 families at that time. The present convent was built in 1907. The rectory was built in 1911. The Diamond Jubilee was celebrated in 1922. In 1945, St. Peter celebrated the 100th Anniversary. On June 19, 1947, fire destroyed St. Peter Church. Mass was held in the school building until 1951. Newly built St. Peter Church was dedicated April 15, 1951. The church was redecorated in 1959. Italian marble altars and railing were installed, along with a new organ and hand carved wooden statues. In 1964, the first Masses were said in English. In 1965, Mass was first offered with the priest facing the congregation. In 1969, ST. Peter Church formed a parish council. In 1970, Masses were started on Saturday evening. From 1982 to 1986, the church was again renovated. In 1996, St. Peter Church celebrated its 150th Anniversary. In late 2010 and 2011, the church was renovated to become the St. Peter Church we see today.

Pastors:

Fr. Damien Juncker 1847-1844

Fr. Otto Borgess, Fr. F.X. Kalcher, S.J. 1844-1851

Fr. Edward Lieb 1851-1881

Fr. Ernest Windthorst 1881-1894

Fr. William Miggeell 1894-1896

Fr. Frederick Bene 1896-1904

Fr. Martin Heintz 1904-1921

Fr. Francis Krueskamp 1921-1955

Fr. Julius Klinec 1955-1979

Fr. Charles P. Essman 1979-1989

Fr. A. Anthony Frecker 1989-2000

Fr. James P. Black 2000-2006

Fr. William P. Hahn 2006 - present